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## FROM TRUTH TO TEXTBOOK

*The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Educational Resources, and the Challenges of Teaching About Recent Conflict*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter follows two curricular initiatives in Peru, both of which used the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) final report to develop educational materials. It aims to explore whether the "consensus" narrative (Zalaquett, 1996) produced by truth commissions offers a solution to the difficult, controversial, and contested problem of how to teach about recent conflict. To date, there have been more than 40 truth commissions around the world, undertaken as parts of transitional processes following periods of violent conflict and/or massive human rights violations (Hayner, 2011). It has been argued that this "global trend towards truth telling" has emerged as a key part of the process of liberal peace-building, making the establishment of a truth commission a likely transitional justice "norm" (Kelsall, 2005, p. 362) within peace processes and transitions. Likewise, educational reconstruction and reform is increasingly part of the peace-building agenda (Smith, 2011). This process often includes the large-scale review of curriculum and, within this, questions about how recent conflict should be taught. The chapter explores whether the results of a truth commission may be useful resources for teaching about recent conflict, a premise increasingly articulated by scholars, transitional justice, and education actors.

The chapter begins by introducing in more detail the problem of how (and indeed whether) to teach about recent conflict. It then briefly introduces truth commissions as a transitional justice mechanism with considerable pedagogical appeal in the postconflict space. From there, I turn my attention to the Peruvian TRC and the educational resources developed based on its 2003 final report. The chapter does not provide an evaluation of these resources or of their impact on classroom teaching and learning. Instead, it charts their development and the difficult processes by which they did and did not enter Peruvian classrooms, in order to understand more about the possibilities and limitations of the Peruvian TRC as a pedagogical resource.

I argue that, in the Peruvian case, this pedagogical potential remains largely untapped. The chapter outlines a number of reasons for this. First, the TRC's narrative of conflict and its causes is not the same narrative that eventually entered educational resources. The chapter shows how political pressures led to the presentation of a sanitized version of the conflict to students, in which state human rights violations are acknowledged but not detailed, and they are presented as

inevitable. Second, the reliance on the TRC as the only source of content for teaching about the recent conflict in Peru opened opportunities for political actors to challenge not only the decision to include discussion of the conflict in the curriculum, but also the very legitimacy of the TRC's work. Third, education actors increasingly understood learning about conflict as relevant only for particular communities as a preventative strategy. This enabled a reproduction of conflict dynamics in which certain (poor, indigenous, rural) communities were labeled by state actors as threats to national security. Again, this marked a major deviation from the TRC's narrative, which drew attention to such labeling and the pervasive racism and social exclusion behind it, as among the causes of Peru's conflict. The TRC insisted that all Peruvians understand and reflect upon these causes.

These developments occurred in the absence of a clear policy justifying the need for teaching about recent conflict in Peru. The chapter argues for the importance of such a policy to support curricular initiatives to address recent conflict. It suggests that a closer and more intentional relationship between transitional justice processes, like truth commissions, and educational reform processes might create a political space in which such a policy could be usefully developed. Finally, the chapter concludes by asking questions about how a truth commission report might best function as one important source, among others, through which students could learn about conflict.

#### TEACHING ABOUT RECENT CONFLICT

In Peru, as elsewhere, history is no longer a taught subject within the national curriculum. Instead, it forms part of the subject of social studies, which also explores topics such as geography, citizenship, and global studies. Already this decision affects the way that history teaching is delivered—selectively, thematically, alongside other content. For instance, teaching about Peru's internal armed conflict occurs in the final year of social sciences at the secondary level, intermeshed with units exploring the Cold War, colonial independence movements around the world, and the rise of the United States as a superpower. Educators and historians debate the merits of teaching history independently as its own subject or of teaching it within a multidisciplinary subject like social studies or citizenship (e.g., Wineburg, 2001). The decision about how history is approached at the level of curricular organization has implications for how, if, and in what level of detail teaching about recent conflict is approached. In Peru, the decision to teach history within social studies was part of a larger educational reform process initiated in the transitional period of the early 2000s. Peru's educational system was reoriented towards a series of competence-based outcomes, including the development of citizenship skills through the new subject of social sciences.<sup>1</sup> History, previously taught as a linear, nationalist narrative marked with key dates and figures, was subsumed within this subject “in which an endless number of themes ought to be covered in very limited time, without the necessary training and support for teachers” (de

Belaunde, 2012, para. 6). This chapter explores how Peru's recent conflict has found a place within this subject.

Moving on from the broad question of how history finds its way into the curriculum, teaching the history of recent conflict raises further questions. A first is whether to teach it at all. In part, this question is tied to the discussion around when history starts and stops and whether the recent past forms part of history. For instance, in Northern Ireland, the compulsory history curriculum ends with the partition of Ireland in 1922, providing a clear declaration that decades must pass before more recent events (including the entire period of "the Troubles") become history (see Barton & McCully, 2005; Gallagher, this volume; Kitson, 2007). Likewise, Lebanon's history, as depicted in a state-distributed textbook, stops in 1943, the year that Lebanon gained independence (Van Ommering, 2015); while in Sri Lanka, history stops in 1979, excluding the conflict that Sri Lanka has experienced in the decades since (Sanchez Meertens, 2013).

Of course, the question of whether to teach about recent conflict is tied to the sensitivity of the subject matter, concerns about how to raise it in classrooms (including from teachers, who often feel unprepared and undersupported to introduce such discussions; e.g., Cole, 2007; Weldon, 2010), and to disagreement (including between parties of the conflict) about how conflict should be narrated and explained. For many (e.g., Jelin, 2003), it is reasonable to expect that a certain amount of time might pass before it becomes possible to teach about recent conflict in a society. Cunningham (2014) suggested a period of at least 10 years. Sometimes the decision not to teach about history, recent or otherwise, is explicit. In Rwanda, a moratorium on history teaching as a whole was imposed after the 1994 genocide and has never been officially lifted, though in recent years history teaching is reappearing in the curriculum (King, 2014). South Africa's first postapartheid curriculum did not include history as a taught subject, opting for a forward-looking approach that "avoided engaging with the traumatic past" (Weldon, 2010, p. 82). Subsequent curricula, however, have made history, within social studies, and discussion of the apartheid past crucial for the development of a new South Africa. In other cases, history remains part of postconflict curricula, but recent conflict is omitted. For instance, in Guatemala, the social studies curriculum includes history to the present day, but includes no formal instruction or guidance about how to teach Guatemala's 34-year civil war (e.g., Bellino, 2014b; Oglesby, 2007). In all the above cases, including those where recent conflict is not explicitly addressed by curricula, young people learn about conflict from other sources, including their own and their families' experiences, the media, and political influences (Paulson, 2015).

In cases where the question of whether to teach about recent conflict is answered affirmatively, a subsequent question is how to do so. For many, the "prevailing view" (McCully, 2012, p. 164) is that the disciplinary approach to history teaching is the "most effective way for history teaching to contribute to post-conflict understanding." Under this approach, history is taught not just (or even primarily) so that students learn specific historical content and narrative, but so that they develop the skills of historians. They engage with multiple sources, explore alternative interpretations of the same event, consider differing perspectives, build

arguments, and develop an understanding of history as socially constructed and subject to change (e.g., Seixas, 2004). The approach is clearly distinct from the nationalist approach to history education that has predominated since the rise of the nation-state (Carretero, 2011), which concentrates on instilling a sense of national identity by learning a clear narrative of the development of the nation, populated by key events and individuals.

In a recent review of approaches to history education about recent conflict (Paulson, 2015), I found that despite the favorable view of the disciplinary approach, it has not been widely adopted in postconflict contexts to teach about recent conflict. It is the approach to teaching history in Northern Ireland, but, as mentioned above, “the Troubles” are not addressed within the compulsory history curriculum (Barton & McCully, 2005; also see Gallagher, this volume). The disciplinary approach is also used in the South African social studies curriculum (Weldon, 2007) and in a new curriculum in Northern Cyprus (Papadakis, 2008). However, in the majority of postconflict contexts where recent conflict is taught, the approach remains more traditional. The traditional, nationalist approach to teaching history has not been widely celebrated for the ways in which it teaches about conflict. The predominance of a victor’s version of history, the silencing of voices and alternative histories, and the large-scale refusal to acknowledge and engage with violence and exploitation committed in the formation of the nation are among the many critiques leveled at traditional approaches to teaching history. For instance, in their comparative study of textbooks about the Second World War in China, France, Germany, Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom, Crawford and Foster (2007) found versions of the conflict oriented towards instilling national pride and common identity, shaped by ideological, cultural, and sociopolitical forces in the present, rather than by a retelling of the “facts” of this landmark historical episode.

These problems persist in the experiences of postconflict countries teaching about recent conflict (Paulson, 2015). For instance, as history education returns to Rwanda, a single “official historical narrative” (Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy, & Longman, 2008, p. 674) is taught at the expense of historical accuracy and opportunities for dialogue (see, e.g., Kearney, 2011; King, 2010, 2014). Ethno-nationalist narratives that reinforce strong in-group and out-group identities narrate recent conflict to learners in Bosnia-Herzegovina (e.g., Torsti, 2007), Cyprus (e.g., Latif, 2010; Papadakis, 2008), and Israel/Palestine (e.g., Al-Haj, 2005; Bar-Tal, 1998), while oversimplified explanations minimize recent conflict as inevitable and historically exceptional in Guatemala (Oglesby, 2007).

However, theorists have charted a move “from indoctrination to inspiration” (Bellino, 2014a, p. 4) within a traditional, collective memory approach to history education. While the approach to history education remains the transmission of a linear master narrative of the nation (or perhaps of the community or the world, especially if history is taught within social sciences), its purpose is to create engaged citizens rather than obedient followers. In the context of recent conflict, researchers see an opportunity to create a new story, a new national myth, and a new narrative that fosters unity, reconciliation, and citizenship. Under this approach,

as under the disciplinary one, classrooms can offer an important venue to contextualize, mediate, and debate the knowledge about recent conflict that learners will bring with them in varying degrees and with different levels of conviction. However, the evidence reviewed here does not paint a positive picture of the contribution that history teaching about recent conflict is making in many contexts. Perhaps the presence of a truth commission, and the use of its final report, present a way forward?

#### THE PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL OF TRUTH COMMISSIONS

Truth commissions hold clear potential for both disciplinary and inspiration approaches to history education about recent conflict. For a history education seeking a “new” national narrative to contribute towards reconciliation in the post-conflict space, a truth commission holds promise as a source for this narrative. And, for history education adopting a disciplinary approach, the truth commission narrative is interesting both as source and as a process to be explored.

Hayner (2011) outlined key features of truth commissions: they are time-bound, investigating human rights violations over a specific period and operating for a finite period of time (often 2 to 3 years); they are state sanctioned (often created as part of a peace agreement or in a transitional period out of conflict and/or massive human rights violations); they collect testimony from victims, witnesses, and perpetrators of human rights abuses; and they publish reports of their findings and make recommendations based on these findings. The findings of truth commissions are based on the testimony they collect, other investigations they conduct, often including exhumations and public hearings, and the huge amount of research that they conduct. Accompanying the documentation of human rights abuses and their authors, truth commissions increasingly offer an investigation into the causes of conflict and a series of recommendations designed to ensure its nonrecurrence, as captured in the title of the Argentine Truth Commission’s final report, *Nunca Mas* (Never Again).

There are at least four reasons why a truth commission’s narrative of conflict, its causes, actors, and effects, presents considerable pedagogical potential. First, it is what is often described as a “consensus narrative” (Zalaquett, 1996), since it collects testimony from actors affected by conflict in multiple ways, including victims, witnesses, and perpetrators. Acknowledging the tremendous difficulty of their task, truth commissions set out to establish “a broad—and specific—truth that will be accepted across society” (Hayner, 2011, p. 23). Given the challenges of arriving at such a narrative described in the earlier section, this seems at once appealing from the perspective of the curriculum developers tasked with providing guidance around teaching about recent conflict and a better alternative (than ethno-nationalist, mythical, or exceptionalist narratives) from the perspective of those interested in the contribution of history education towards peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Second, the consensus narrative of the truth commission is based on a historiographic process. It is verifiable, factual, and documented. In this way it

might overcome criticisms of historical inaccuracy, long leveled on history education about violent conflict (the victor's version) and evident in recent cases like Rwanda's (e.g., King, 2010, 2014). Likewise, through its process, it may evade—or at least be able to answer—criticisms of bias or of favoring one group's interests over another's. Third, this historiographic process is enriched by the words of real people who were actors in, and affected by, the events the truth commission outlines. As Cole and Barsalou (2006) explained, truth commissions “present the voices of ordinary people with compelling stories to tell” (p. 12). In addition to adding a layer of credibility, this adds interest, a promise of potential engagement for pupils, fascinated with and empathic to the voices they encounter in their history lesson.

Finally, this consensus narrative, factually accurate and participative, is state sanctioned. In most instances, truth commissions are not only created with state sanction, but their final reports are also accepted and acted upon by the state. Indeed, this state acknowledgment of a truth commission's work is often one of its most important symbolic achievements, particularly in cases where the truth may be widely known but has been actively denied by state actors (Hayner, 2011). Given the difficulty of acknowledging and teaching about human rights violations committed by the state, the sanctioning of the truth commission by the state suggests its approval of the truth commission narrative and its acceptability for other state institutions, like its national curriculum.

This pedagogical potential is increasingly recognized. Educational resources have been produced based on the truth commissions of Guatemala (see Bellino, 2014b; Oglesby, 2007), Liberia, Sierra Leone (see Paulson, 2006), Timor Leste, and Peru, the case discussed in detail here and to which I now turn my attention.

#### CONFLICT AND TRUTH IN PERU

Peru's TRC was established in 2001, in the wake of former President Alberto Fujimori's flight from the country following a corruption scandal. It investigated the period from 1980 to 2000, during which time three successive governments fought the communist-inspired rebel group Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*). Initially the state response to Shining Path's declaration of war was limited, but emergency zones were declared in 1983 and, in some cases, these remained in place for the next 15 years. These were areas where state presence previously had been limited, home primarily to indigenous communities who had long faced poverty and social exclusion. Shining Path was able to assume control, implementing its violent “popular justice” (Theidon, 2004). In these zones, state forces often responded indiscriminately, committing grave human rights violations against civilians as well as Shining Path militants. Emergency zones were contained in the Andean interior and jungle regions of the country, though the conflict began to take on a national dimension in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Shining Path launched attacks in the capital, Lima, and military strategy became more aggressive (Comision de la Verdad y la Reconciliacion [CVR], 2003). In 1990, Alberto Fujimori won democratic elections, replacing the government of Alan García,

which had been plagued by economic crisis. Fujimori maintained and increased the aggressive “antiterrorist” strategy, suspending the constitution in 1992 and introducing legislation that disregarded due legal process. In 1992, police apprehended the leader of Shining Path and many key figures, which largely debilitated the group. Fujimori nonetheless maintained and enhanced his draconian stance, dismantling democratic institutions and continuing to use the ‘terrorist threat’ as a justification. The degree of corruption of the Fujimori government was exposed in a scandal shortly after his victory to a third term in 2000. Fujimori’s hasty withdrawal from Peru opened the political and social space to begin discussions about the armed conflict alongside processes to rebuild democracy in the country.

It is worth noting the uniqueness of the Peruvian transition. Unlike other contexts where a truth commission is established as part of a negotiated peace process, the defeated Shining Path was not involved in the establishment of the TRC or the wider transition, which was led first by a transitional government and then by the newly elected government of Alejandro Toledo. Nonetheless, the TRC became a crucial part of a transition process that was largely framed in terms of a return to democracy (rather than the end of conflict), and it enabled an unprecedented level of national discussion about the conflict.

The TRC was made up of 12 Peruvian commissioners, including academics, human rights activists, lawyers, religious leaders, a former congresswoman, and, controversially, a former air force lieutenant. It was funded by the Peruvian government and coordinated by a number of international donors via the United Nations Development Program (CVR, 2003). The TRC opened five regional offices, collected testimony from nearly 17,000 people, conducted three exhumations, and held public hearings in each of its sites (CVR, 2003). Its 9-volume 8,000-page final report found that the conflict had killed nearly 70,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands, making it the most severe in Peru’s history. The TRC attributed responsibility for 54% of the deaths to Shining Path and found the armed forces responsible for 34%. Of those killed by the conflict, the TRC found that 85% came from the handful of Andean and jungle regions where emergency zones had been declared, 79% lived in rural areas, and 75% spoke the indigenous language, Quechua, as their mother tongue. Two-thirds of the victims had not completed secondary school (CVR, 2003).

For many urban Peruvians, the TRC’s findings came as a shock. In addition to clarifying the human impact of the conflict, the TRC produced a clear narrative about its origins, causes, and persistence. It explained that the “problem of violence,” “crucial and quotidian for hundreds and thousands of Peruvians,” had been “relegated among the public and private priorities of the country for many years” (CVR, 2003, vol. 1, p. 19). This was due to persistent “veiled racism and scornful attitudes” that enabled both stark inequality and exclusion for indigenous, rural communities and widespread indifference to this among “the moderately educated urban sector” (CVR, 2003, vol. 1, p. 9). Therefore, alongside government corruption and authoritarianism, and the political motivations of Shining Path, the



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TRC identified racism, social exclusion, persistent inequality, and the indifference of privileged groups as causes of conflict in Peru.

The TRC presented its final report in 2003. Its findings were accepted by President Alejandro Toledo, a political newcomer, who won the 2001 elections and whose party was largely unconnected to the conflict. The government committed itself to implementing the TRC's recommendations, which included "achiev[ing] a conscientiousness of peace" and a "distancing from the proclivity to violence" through changes to Peru's national curriculum (CVR, 2003, Vol. 9, pp. 134–138).

#### FROM TRUTH TO TEXTBOOK

In April 2002, about halfway through its operating period, the TRC signed an agreement of understanding with Peru's Ministry of Education. It outlined a collaboration, to be funded by the TRC, including a place for the TRC in the ministry's then ongoing curriculum review. This included the production of educational materials based on the TRC, preparation of teacher training materials for teaching about the conflict, delivery of a series of workshops for teachers, and a national survey of secondary school students' knowledge about citizenship. The first resource discussed here, *Recordándonos*, was a direct outcome of this agreement between the TRC and the Ministry of Education. The second, the 2008 social sciences textbook for final-year secondary students, was an outcome of the curriculum review, completed in 2006 as part of the educational reform process, discussed in more detail below. The discussion of the resources that follows is based on qualitative research conducted in Peru between 2006 and 2008, which explored the impact of the TRC's recommendations in the educational sector. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with key actors from the TRC, the Ministry of Education, regional education authorities, and the wider educational community in Lima and Ayacucho. (For a fuller discussion of this research, see Paulson, 2010a, 2010b, 2011.)

#### *Recordándonos*

*Recordándonos* was not developed during the TRC's lifetime. Instead, it was a project born after the presentation of the TRC's 2003 final report that aimed to meet the unfilled objective in the TRC and Ministry of Education agreement to develop educational materials. A well-established human rights organization partnered to develop the resources. The director of this organization had been a truth commissioner and a faculty member of education at a leading university, whose rector had been president of the TRC. The Ministry of Education lent its support to the project and pledged to review the materials for eventual distribution to the nation's schools. *Recordándonos* was developed as a series of six workbooks, three for use in primary schools, where they would support curriculum around "integral communication" and "social personal" development, and three for use at the secondary level within the social sciences curriculum. They are well illustrated and, at the secondary level, include photographs drawn from a powerful

exhibit that the TRC curated alongside the release of its final report. Each workbook has an introductory section aimed at motivating students to discuss their impressions of the topics developed. A second section explores students' existing knowledge of Peru's armed conflict, encouraging projects to investigate family, community, and regional histories, and using case studies and stories to illustrate the realities of conflict. The final section investigates a particular theme in detail (which differs for each volume), drawing on historical content collected by the TRC and encouraging student research projects and group work.

The *Recordándonos* workbooks were piloted in seven regions of Peru, where the university was conducting a larger research project on educational reform. Teachers received training workshops before introducing the workbooks to their students. Feedback was positive. Overall, teachers approved of the resources and said that they provided useful entry points to a subject that they were hesitant to discuss. Students' knowledge of conflict increased after using the workbooks, and they shared projects that impressed the *Recordándonos* team with their depth and breadth. The team presented the workbooks and the results of their piloting to the Ministry of Education in 2005, recommending that the ministry adopt them and distribute them nationwide together with a series of workshops for teachers to support their use. The Ministry of Education undertook a review of the workbooks in late 2005, which is discussed in more detail below.

### *The Social Sciences Textbook*

Peru's national curriculum—didactic and outdated—had been slated for overhaul since at least 1993, but the overhaul was consistently postponed by the Fujimori government (Rivero, 2007). The review was finally initiated in 2000 and became part of the wider reform of Peru's education sector, one of many key initiatives in the post-Fujimori transition. The process was consultative and lengthy, resulting in an outcomes-oriented curriculum, developing skills, capacities, and capabilities for the following objectives for basic education in Peru: personal development, exercise of citizenship, creation of a knowledge society, and linkages with the world of work (Ministerio de Educacion, 2006). As mentioned above, one of the many changes introduced by the new curricular design was the elimination of history as a taught subject in favor of social sciences. The change was dramatic, from a traditional nationalist approach to history education replete with military heroes and important dates, to a globalized, nonchronological exploration of human social and cultural development. Under the new social studies syllabus, Peru's armed conflict is addressed in the final year of secondary school as part of a unit on “the second half of the twentieth century” (Ministerio de Educacion, 2006, p. 191). The syllabus is a bullet point list, including “the Cold War; the international politics of the United States; processes of decolonialization; and subversive movements and peace processes in Peru.” In a citizenship unit that same year, the syllabus calls for a discussion of “violence and internal conflict in Peru, truth and justice” (Ministerio de Educacion, 2006, p. 192). These bullet points

constitute the only Ministry of Education policy on teaching about recent conflict in Peru.

While the new curriculum design changed much—at least on paper—it did not do away with the reliance on a single, approved textbook as the central way to deliver content in a subject area. With the advent of the new curriculum, a suite of new textbooks was required, including one on the new subject of social sciences. Publishers bid to produce textbooks based on the syllabus for each subject at each year level. The contract for the social sciences textbook at the final year of secondary school (level 5) went to the Colombian publishing house, *Editorial Norma*. The publishers contracted with a Peruvian historian to develop the sections of the textbook that dealt with Peru’s recent past, including the armed conflict. The historian used the TRC’s final report as the source for the content about the armed conflict, discussed in more detail below. The textbooks were distributed to state schools nationwide in 2007.

#### *The Pedagogical Potential of a State-Sanctioned Truth Commission Narrative?*

This section explores challenges from state actors that both the *Recordándonos* workbooks and the *Editorial Norma* textbooks faced, despite the fact that both were based on the state-sanctioned TRC narrative. It charts challenges faced during two administrations: the government of Alejandro Toledo (2001–2006) who, interview respondents repeatedly explained, was able to accept the final report of the TRC since he personally and his party did not have a “human rights debt”; and the subsequent government of Alan García (2006–2011), who, according to the TRC’s findings, did have a clear “human rights debt.” In 2006, Alan García once again became president of Peru. He and his APRA (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*, American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) party had been in power from 1985 to 1990, part of the period investigated by the TRC. The TRC attributed responsibility for serious human rights violations to the first APRA administration, naming—and in some cases suggesting the prosecution of—key APRA figures who were now once again in government.

The Ministry of Education review of the *Recordándonos* workbooks occurred in 2005 on the threshold of transition between these two administrations. Even under the Toledo government, the *Recordándonos* resources were challenged within and beyond the Ministry of Education. In reviewing the materials, the director of basic primary education oversaw a process that “changed—though not substantively, but yes, we did change—certain things because, as a part of the State we [the Ministry of Education] cannot openly present information against the State.”<sup>2</sup> Table 1 illustrates two examples of these changes. In the revised version, human rights violations were removed or diluted, and state violations were presented as inevitable or excusable given the circumstances.

Table 1. Ministry of Education Revisions to the *Recordándonos* Workbooks

Recordándonos workbook	Original version	Revised version
Primary workbook, grades 3 and 4, timeline of Peru's conflict	"The government decided to rely on the Armed Forces and the Police Forces to resolve the situation. They also used violence and in many cases did not respect human rights."	"In many cases innocent people were killed in the fight against the subversive groups. Communities organized to defend themselves against this situation."
Primary workbook, grades 5 and 6	"The army had orders to end the conflict quickly. For this reason it also committed a series of human rights violations (assassinations, forced disappearances, etc.) against the population. The army assumed this as a 'necessary cost.' They regularly identified areas as 'red zones,' where, on occasion, the army entered and killed anyone suspicious without proof of whether they were subversive or not. These acts are profoundly condemnable."	"The military had the mission to end conflict as quickly as possible and they thought that by responding with the same violence, they would reach this objective. The result was very bad: many innocent people died because the human rights of all people were not respected."

These revisions were undertaken in light of reservations expressed to the Ministry of Education by the Intelligence Services, the Chorillos Military Academy, the Ministry of Defense, and the Congress about the *Recordándonos* resources. The director of basic primary education explained that "they weren't censoring, but the very fact of their questions made us realize there were special interests involved."<sup>3</sup> The *Recordándonos* team accepted the Ministry of Education's revisions and produced a second version to present for approval. They began seeking further funding to support the distribution of the resources and the large-scale roll out of training workshops for teachers that they had envisioned. In the meantime, a further letter arrived at the Ministry of Education from the minister of defense. It stated that the materials were insulting to the armed forces and were not acceptable as national curriculum content. This letter stalled the approval process for the workbooks within the Ministry of Education. The *Recordándonos* team hoped that the delay would be temporary, but it coincided with the change of government described above. Discussions about the approval of the *Recordándonos* resource were never resumed under the García administration.

In contrast to *Recordándonos*, the Ministry of Education-commissioned social sciences textbook did not face any challenges in reaching classrooms in Peru's state schools, perhaps because knowledge of the syllabus was not widely known outside the Ministry of Education. It was distributed in 2007 by the García

government with little notice and no controversy. This was to change in 2008, when a congresswoman from García's APRA party (who had briefly been minister of education in 1990) decried the textbooks as "ideological contraband" and "an apology for terrorism" on national television. Like the letter from the minister of defense described above, the congresswoman argued that the textbook was "insulting to the armed forces" and demanded that the textbooks be removed from Peru's schools at once ("Textos escolares con supuesta," 2008). More than Peru's disappointing 2003 performance on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) or the major educational reforms undertaken in the post-Fujimori period, including the curricular overhaul described above, the congresswoman's attack on the textbook made news. From August 2008, when the interview aired, to October 2008, when the committee established to investigate her accusations ruled that the textbook should not be withdrawn from schools, the "hysteria" ("Libros: Historia e histeria," 2008) around the textbook swirled on television, in newspapers, and in online blogs.

As an observer, I waited for the Ministry of Education to justify and argue in favor of its decision to include a discussion of Peru's recent conflict in the curriculum. This did not happen. Various officials from the ministry responded to the congresswoman, either assuring the public of the efficiency of the process underway to review the textbook or denying their personal responsibility for its contents. At no point during the months of controversy did the Ministry of Education release a statement supporting the importance of teaching about the internal conflict, nor did it justify the approach taken to discussing the conflict in the textbook. Other actors stepped in to make these points and to defend the textbook. They did so by insisting that the content within the textbook was based on the TRC's final report. The historian who had been commissioned by *Editorial Norma* stated that "the parts of the book that deal with the theme of violence are based on the Final Report of the TRC. There are parts that mention abuses of human rights because this happened" (as quoted in "Libros: Historia e histeria," 2008). The former president of the TRC entered the debate, denying that the textbook was insulting or ideological and arguing that "our work was official, supported by the government of then President Alejandro Toledo; therefore the TRC is a state source" ("Libros: Historia e histeria," 2008).

In what many argued was not a coincidence, the congresswoman's interventions came in the same week that celebrations were underway to recognize the 5-year anniversary of the TRC. Given the APRA government's "human rights debt" described above, the textbook offered a convenient way for the party to reiterate its familiar response to the TRC report as "an apology for terrorism" at an important moment for the TRC. In decrying the textbook, the congresswoman was able to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the TRC and its narrative of conflict. What was once a "state source" was now an insult to the state and an inaccurate one at that, as the congresswoman argued that the TRC's final figures on the death toll of the conflict remained unconfirmed, despite the fact that they were accepted by the Toledo government.

Earlier I described how a state's role in establishing a truth commission and accepting its findings may enable the truth commission to be a vehicle for the discussion of recent conflict, including human rights violations committed by the state, in the curriculum. Both examples outlined here demonstrate that in Peru, this potential has been neither straightforward and uncontested, nor entirely enacted. As discussed in more detail below, even the revised (watered-down) version of the *Recordándonos* workbooks was never approved by the Ministry of Education or widely distributed to schools in Peru. The *Editorial Norma* textbooks, however, do continue to be used in schools. Despite the controversy the congresswoman sparked, ultimately the textbooks were neither changed nor withdrawn from schools. It is likely that the textbook's use of the TRC as the source was a factor that persuaded the review committee that the textbooks were acceptable curriculum resources. Therefore, while the state-sanctioned nature of the TRC report has not made teaching about recent conflict easy or uncontroversial, it has at least contributed towards making it possible.

*The Pedagogical Potential of a Consensus Version?*

Having outlined how the TRC final report has entered into Peruvian classrooms through educational resources, it is equally important to examine how the TRC's narrative has been translated into an educational narrative in these resources. The TRC's final report is 9 volumes and more than 8,000 pages long. Its companion report, *Hatun Willakuy* (Transfer Commission of the TRC of Peru, 2004), is nearly 500 pages. Clearly, the task of distilling this work into something accessible, age appropriate, and engaging was a challenge. In interviews, the *Recordándonos* team described the difficulty of reducing the TRC report into only six workbooks. They adopted a clear strategy by which to do so. Their vision was that the books would bring together three themes: reconciliation, recognition of the human rights violations of the past, and the generation of new values. They adopted a position that "students didn't need to know about absolutely all of the atrocities that occurred; what they did need to know were certain examples in order to understand deeply and to be able to analyze why these things occurred and to be able to speak to this truth without generating a lot of anxiety or fear."<sup>4</sup> I was unable to interview the historian who authored the relevant sections of the *Editorial Norma* textbook. His task to distill the TRC's report was likely even more difficult, resulting as it did in only 12 pages within the 262-page textbook for the final year of social sciences, arguably an insufficient coverage for Peru's most recent and most serious armed conflict.

In both educational resources, the narratives differed in important ways from those in the TRC's final report. First, the Ministry of Education revision of the *Recordándonos* resources described above introduced a different approach to dealing with crimes committed by the armed forces and other state actors. As they did with violations committed by Shining Path and other armed groups, the TRC clearly outlined the violations of human rights committed by state actors and the decision-making processes behind them, often recommending the prosecution of

individuals and clearly indicting wrongdoing where the rights of civilians were not respected and where prejudice of disadvantaged communities enabled state violence. The revised version of *Recordándonos* often removed explicit acknowledgment of the state as an actor behind human rights violations (as in the first example in Table 1), removed detail about the human rights violations committed by the state (as in the second example), and presented the state's response as inevitable given the challenge of terrorism. This inevitability of response was also occasionally present in the first version of the *Recordándonos* workbooks and in the *Editorial Norma* textbook. A narrative was presented in which the challenge of terrorism was so great, the "culture of violence" so pervasive, that the state had no choice but to respond violently. Gone is the TRC's exploration of why armed groups took hold and gained support in Peru or how the state's response compounded armed actors and indigenous communities under a single banner of "terrorist" (e.g., CVR, 2003; Theidon, 2012).

This was compounded by a second change to the narrative. The TRC engaged with the complex ways in which indigenous communities negotiated the presence of Shining Path and military actors, including by creating auto-defense groups, which also committed human rights violations. However, both educational resources narrowed this complexity, relying instead on the image of innocent victims caught "between two fires" (Theidon, 2010). This trope, which Oglesby (2007) and Bellino (2014b) found in education resources produced to explain Guatemala's lengthy civil conflict, obscured the agency, politics, and decision-making that were present in indigenous communities dramatically affected by conflict, ignoring the ways rural, indigenous people negotiated, tolerated, collaborated with, and resisted the daily presence of either or both the armed forces and Shining Path. The imposed "innocent victimhood" (Theidon, 2010, 2012) of the emerging conflict narrative can contribute to wider societal disempowerment of the rural, indigenous poor.

A third change to the narrative resulted from the two described above. The TRC was unflinching in its insistence that all Peruvians were culpable for the country's armed conflict and drew particular attention to the responsibility of an urban, educated elite and middle class to acknowledge their indifference to the plight of their less fortunate compatriots. Were Peru's privileged classes more concerned by the conflict, more insistent upon its resolution, more aware of and appalled by the human rights violations committed by the Peruvian armed forces, the TRC argued, the conflict would not have lasted so long or had so many casualties. This insistence on structural inequalities and their social expression in privileged indifference was not present in the narrative of conflict that the *Editorial Norma* textbook presented and was watered down in the *Recordándonos* resources. Instead, the period of conflict was presented as one of a "culture of violence"—a situation that, once introduced, received no analysis or exploration, whose causes and roots were not investigated—and was now being replaced by a "culture of peace" (see Oglesby, 2007). The responsibility of all Peruvians to build this culture of peace was emphasized, but the (structural) causes of the culture of violence, and the ways in which it was expressed in different sectors of society, were not.

As demonstrated by the letters from defense actors and the congresswoman's interventions, the TRC's narrative of conflict did not secure a consensus version of conflict that all actors in society could accept and agree with. Military actors and others on the far right of the political spectrum disagreed with the TRC's final report from the beginning, as did actors on the far left. Changes in political leadership have shifted consensus around the TRC, particularly as evidenced during García's government, including questions about whether its version is accepted by authorities. Of course, scholars question the possibility and the desirability (e.g., Hunt, 2004) of achieving a consensus narrative through a truth commission (or any other process), with Ignatieff (1996) famously arguing that a truth commission's function was "simply . . . to narrow the range of permissible lies" (p. 113). Even if a truth commission were to achieve a consensus narrative, it should not be taken for granted that that narrative would be translated directly into the educational arena. Complex, lengthy, detailed, and adult, a truth commission's final report has to be interpreted before becoming an educational resource. In the Peruvian case, this interpretation altered the narrative in ways that I argue are not helpful towards fostering an understanding of the causes of conflict in Peru, or in stimulating discussion about the individual and collective ways in which young people might engage in transforming them.

#### *Policy Issues or Lack Thereof*

The *Recordándonos* resources were never officially adopted by the Ministry of Education; however, they were distributed by the ministry to 2,600 state schools in Peru. In 2004, under Alejandro Toledo's government, Peru declared its education system to be in a state of emergency. This was largely due to the poor performance of Peruvian students on the 2003 PISA tests. The symptoms of the emergency, according to the ministry, included students failing to learn basic skills to contribute to their personal development and the growth of the nation, studying in suboptimal conditions, and failing to develop as citizens. Over the course of 2 years, schools in the "most marginalized and excluded" (Oficina de Prensa e Comunicaciones, 2004) communities were to be prioritized with a series of actions and investments in order to address this emergency. While the educational emergency framework did not include any conflict analysis, there was considerable confluence between the areas most severely affected by the recent conflict and those schools identified as the most marginalized. The ministry pointed to its emergency plan when it was called upon to respond to the TRC recommendations. The emergency program aimed to address educational quality in rural schools and in communities living in poverty as the TRC had called for. In a further demonstration of the ministry's attention to the TRC's recommendations, the ministry distributed the *Recordándonos* workbooks to the 2,600 schools privileged in its emergency framework.

This decision was explained to me as follows by a ministry official:



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This group of schools was privileged with a series of materials taking into account that *Sendero Luminoso* generally took hold in those zones with the greatest need and living in extreme poverty. This is why this material was destined specifically to these schools, privileged as a sort of prevention against the possible resurgence of violence within their contexts.<sup>5</sup>

This logic contradicts the messages the TRC worked hard to instill in its final report. First, it continues to view rural, indigenous, poor communities as a threat to national security. Second, it presumes that learning about the recent conflict is relevant only for those communities directly affected by it, ignoring the TRC's insistence that all Peruvians must reflect on, learn about, and take responsibility for the conflict. Inherent in this logic are some of the attitudes that the TRC identified as contributing towards and maintaining the conflict. Framing *Recordándonos* as a "preventative" resource, relevant only to the most marginalized communities where violence is "likely" to take root, detaches the materials from the TRC's emphasis on the deep structural causes of conflict in Peru. It is a policy decision that reiterates the structures of difference, division, regionalism, and racism that the TRC identified as causes of conflict.

It is relevant that this decision was made in the absence of any clear policy about teaching about recent conflict in Peru. Were a policy informed by the TRC's recommendations to the educational sector to be developed, it would certainly have to identify and justify the need for all Peruvians to learn about the country's recent conflict. In the absence of such a policy, the distribution of the *Recordándonos* resources offered another opportunity for the reproduction of conflict dynamics. Such a policy would also have been a useful reference for the Ministry of Education when responding to the congresswoman's attack on the *Editorial Norma* textbook. Indeed, the Ministry of Education never argued for or justified the importance of teaching about the conflict as it responded to the controversy. In the absence of a policy to justify teaching about recent conflict, the debate shifted to one about the legitimacy of the TRC. Ministry officials were more concerned with shifting the "blame" for the content away from themselves than they were with engaging in a national discussion about how and why Peru's armed conflict should be taught.

## CONCLUSION

One lesson to emerge strongly from the Peruvian case is the need for a clear policy to justify and explain the importance of teaching about recent conflict. Including recent conflict within a curricular syllabus is important but insufficient given the political resistance that such a decision is likely to face and the challenge it is likely to pose for teachers. Crucially, this policy should include an explicit justification for the inclusion of an acknowledgment of state human rights violations within the national curriculum. Equally important, it should outline plans to support and train teachers to develop confidence, understand their own experiences of conflict, and feel prepared to introduce discussions about recent conflict with their students.

Arguably, it should also ensure that recent conflict and students' engagement in transforming conflict dynamics is a recurring theme, reaching students at several points along their educational paths. I am under no illusions that arriving at such a policy or securing the resources and capacity to support teachers is easy. However, the Peruvian case adds to a growing body of research (e.g., Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012) that suggests that these needs are paramount for teaching about recent conflict in a way that might contribute meaningfully to objectives like reconciliation and peacebuilding. The Peruvian case highlights the opportunity that transitional governments and new parties (without "human rights debts") have to make policy and initiate processes that might otherwise be impossible and may, as the Peruvian case also illustrates, become impossible again.

In the Peruvian case, the transitional space following Fujimori's exile and during the government of Alejandro Toledo was also a space for widespread educational reform. Indeed, it is increasingly the case that transition following the end of conflict is a time for both transitional justice processes, like truth commissions, and sector-wide educational reform processes. In the Peruvian case, the educational reform process was largely disconnected from the transitional justice one, despite some coincidence in their timelines. In Peru, educational reform was never conceived as one of "educational post-conflict reconstruction" (Buckland, 2005) or as contributing towards peacebuilding. However, even in cases where educational reform has been more tightly conceived as a postconflict process or as part of a peacebuilding agenda, the linkages with transitional justice processes have been marginal (Smith, McCandless, Paulson, & Wheaton, 2011). In Peru, the TRC's deep investigation of education's role in contributing to conflict in Peru and the TRC's recommendations towards the education sector could have been, but were not, a central source and discussion point for the educational reform. It remains to be tested whether a closer and more intentional working relationship between transitional justice and education reform actors might open the space for policymaking of the sort I argue for above.

This chapter makes clear that the use of the TRC as the only source for content about Peru's recent conflict created problems. As in the Guatemalan case that Oglesby (2007) explored, the presentation of the TRC within educational materials was sanitized, was watered down (particularly in the case of state human rights violations), and made use of familiar peace education tropes (e.g., culture of violence/culture of peace; two fires). Increasingly, scholars have argued that these kinds of materials shut down rather than open space for the kinds of difficult dialogues and processes in classrooms that might equip students to transform persistent attitudes and structures linked to conflict in the present (e.g., Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012). Further, the sole reliance on the TRC as the source for teaching about Peru's recent conflict enabled opportunities for politically motivated attempts to block the teaching of recent conflict and to discredit the TRC.

Concluding, however, that the final report of a TRC ought to be used alongside other sources to teach about recent conflict is too simple. From this perspective, perhaps the dissenting publications of armed forces actors—including the retired lieutenant who served as a commissioner for the TRC—which dispute the TRC's

figures, process, and “leftist slant and anti-military slant” (Graziani, as cited in “Informe de la CVR puede,” 2012), should be considered with equal weight. Surely some of the features of a truth commission process outlined above—its methodology, its official capacity due to state sanctioning, its basis in victim testimony—give a truth commission social and pedagogical gravitas. This makes learning about its process and findings more important than other sources. Should a truth commission hold a privileged place within a multiple perspectives approach to teaching and learning about recent conflict? Should its narrative be used to mark a starting point for the shaping of a new national story? Perhaps. Also important, I think, is to include the truth commission *process* as part of curricular content—an understanding of how and why a truth commission was established, the process through which it undertook its work, and the challenges it faced. Such an understanding may help students contextualize its narrative and the conflict it sought to clarify. Hunt (2004), who is critical of the possibility that a truth commission can produce a consensus narrative or a single, objective truth, has suggested that a truth commission be understood as a historical event, rather than as a historical source. For me, understanding a truth commission as both event and a source makes an interesting pedagogical starting place. This, together with strong and explicit policymaking around the importance of teaching about recent conflict, ideally resulting from a process that brings together the concerns of transitional justice and educational reform, may offer possibilities to enact the pedagogical potential of truth commissions, which to date remains largely in the realm of theory rather than practice.

## NOTES

1. The reform also sought to reorient pedagogical practice in Peru away from rote learning and memorization, which had previously characterized the approach to teaching and learning, towards more learner-centered approaches.
2. Interview, February 18, 2008.
3. Interview, February 18, 2008.
4. Interview with *Recordándonos* coordinator, 2008.
5. Interview, 2008.

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